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Job mobility

Job mobility and job search of employed people, including changing industry or occupation, job tenure, and changes in current job (e.g. hours).

Reference period February 2021

Released 7/07/2021

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Key statistics

During the year ending February 2021:

- 975,000 or 7.5% of employed people changed jobs, the lowest annual job mobility rate on record
- Job mobility remained highest for professionals, at 21% of those who changed jobs
- 1.8 million people left or lost a job

Prior to February 2021, information on job mobility was published in [Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment](#)

[/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia/feb-2021/](#)). From February 2021, statistics are now published in three topic-based releases - this Job mobility release, as well as:

- [Underemployed workers \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/underemployed-workers/feb-2021\)](#)
- [Potential workers \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/potential-workers/feb-2021\)](#)

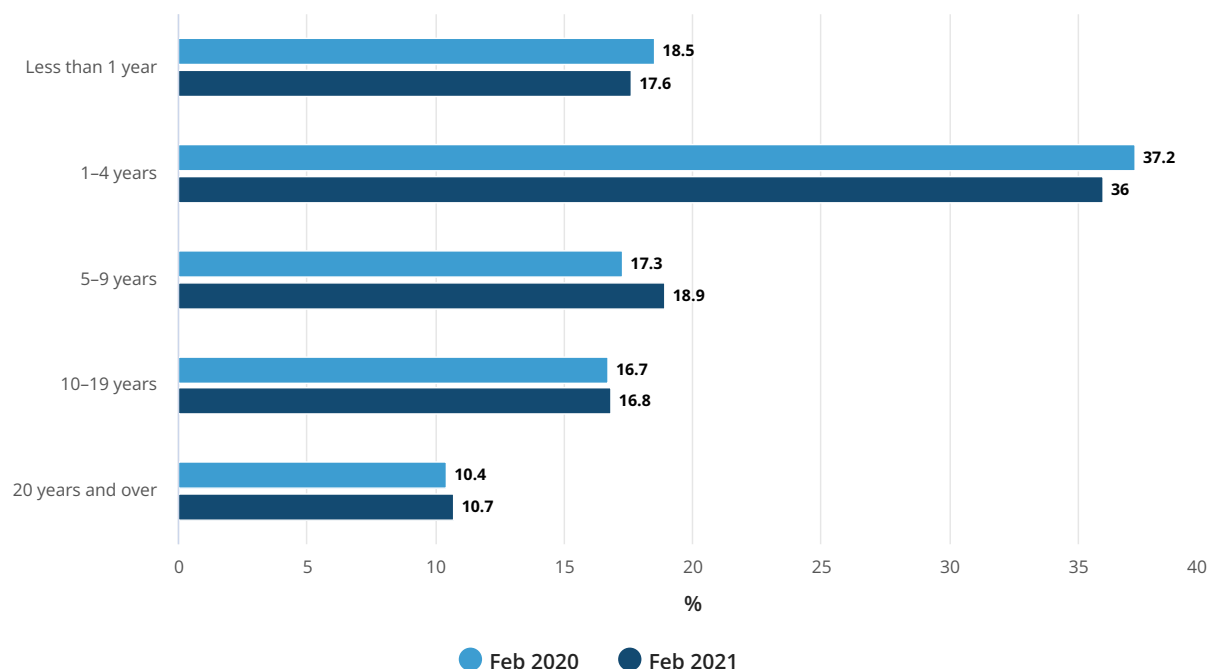
Potential workers, job mobility and underemployment data for 2015 to 2021 are also available in [TableBuilder \(https://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6226.0.00.001\)](#). TableBuilder enables the creation of customised tables and graphs.

Duration of employment

There were 13 million people employed in February 2021. Almost half (46%) had been employed in their current job for 5 years or more, up from 44.3% in February 2020. Of these, around a quarter (23%) had been employed for 20 years or more.

17.6% of employed people had been in their current job for less than 1 year, down from 18.5% in February 2020. The proportion of those in their current job between 1 and 4 years had also fallen since 2020, down from 37.2% to 36.0%.

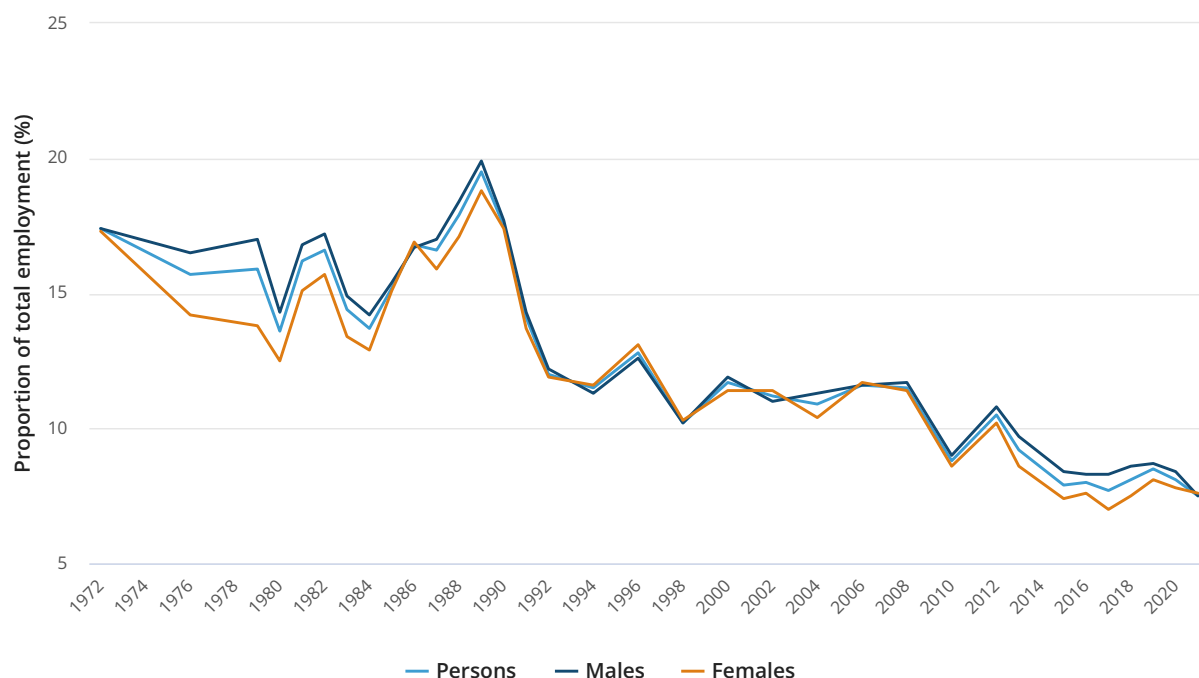
Chart 1: Duration of employment in current job



Job mobility

7.5% (975,000) of employed people changed employers or business in the 12 months up to February 2021. This was the lowest rate of job mobility on record in the annual series, lower than the previous estimate for the year ending February 2020 (8.1%) and slightly lower than the previous record holder for the year ending February 2017 (7.7%).

Chart 2: Employed persons who changed jobs during the year



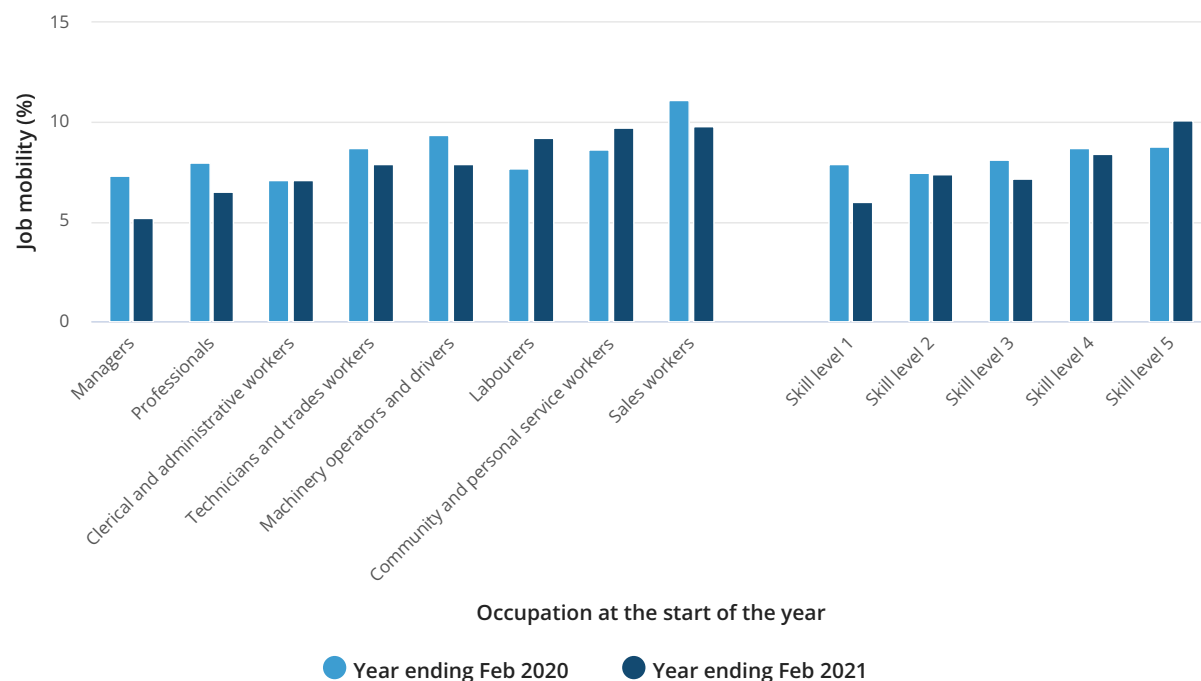
Note: 2015 to 2021 data is available from Table 17 in the data downloads section below. Pre-2015 historical data can be found in the 2018 release of [Participation, Job Search and Mobility \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6226.0Main+Features1February%202018?OpenDocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6226.0Main+Features1February%202018?OpenDocument) publication.

Change in occupation

Job mobility fell in five of the eight major occupation groups. The largest falls were for managers (7.3 per cent to 5.2 per cent), professionals (8.0 per cent to 6.5 per cent) and machinery operators and drivers (9.4 per cent to 7.9 per cent), which were also occupations less impacted by falls in employment early in the pandemic. Falls were also seen for sales workers (11.1 per cent to 9.8 per cent) and technicians and trade workers (8.7 per cent to 7.9 per cent).

Job mobility increased for labourers (7.7 per cent to 9.2 per cent) and community and personal service workers (8.6 per cent to 9.7 per cent) and remained stable for clerical and administrative workers (7.1 per cent).

Chart 3: Job mobility by occupation

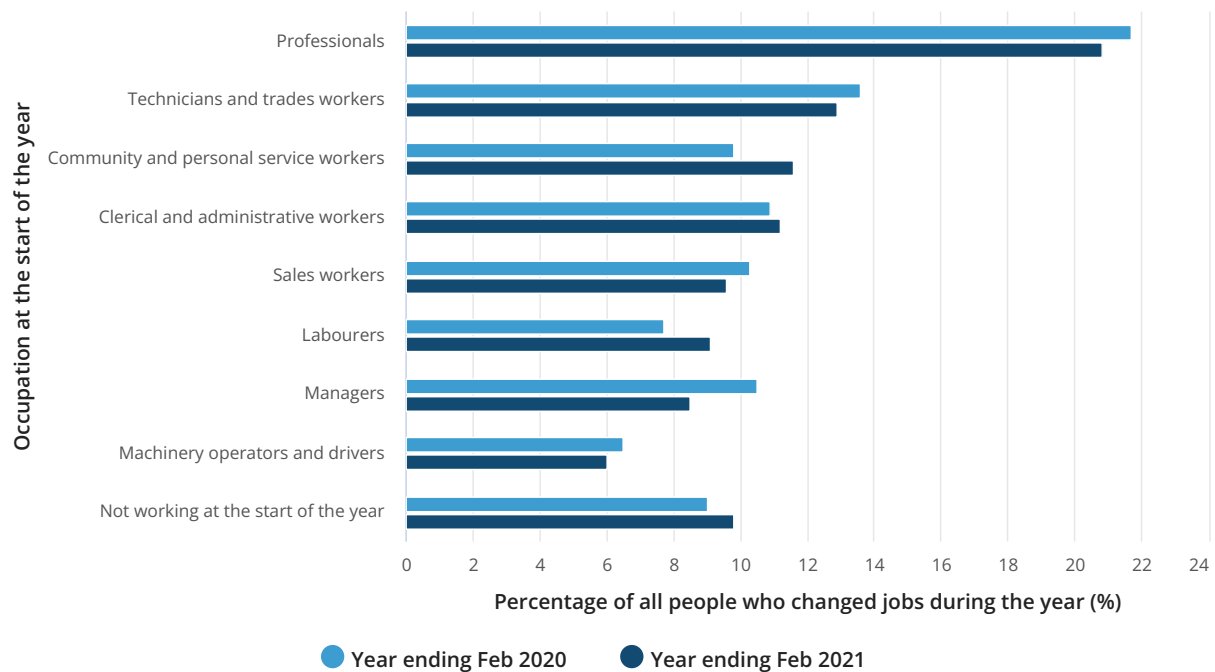


Note:

- Job mobility is the number of people who changed jobs during the year as a proportion of people who were employed at the end of the year
- The occupation at the end of the year is not necessarily the same as the occupation at the start of the year, as people can change occupations when they change jobs

As in previous years, professionals accounted for the largest share of those changing their employer or business in the 12 months to February 2021 (20.8 per cent, down from 21.7 per cent in the previous year). Machinery operators and drivers had the smallest share (6.0 per cent of job mobility, down from 6.5 per cent in the previous year). Community and personal service workers accounted for a higher proportion in the year ending February 2021 (11.6% compared with 9.8% in the previous year), reflecting the greater extent of impacts on this occupation group during the early stages of the pandemic.

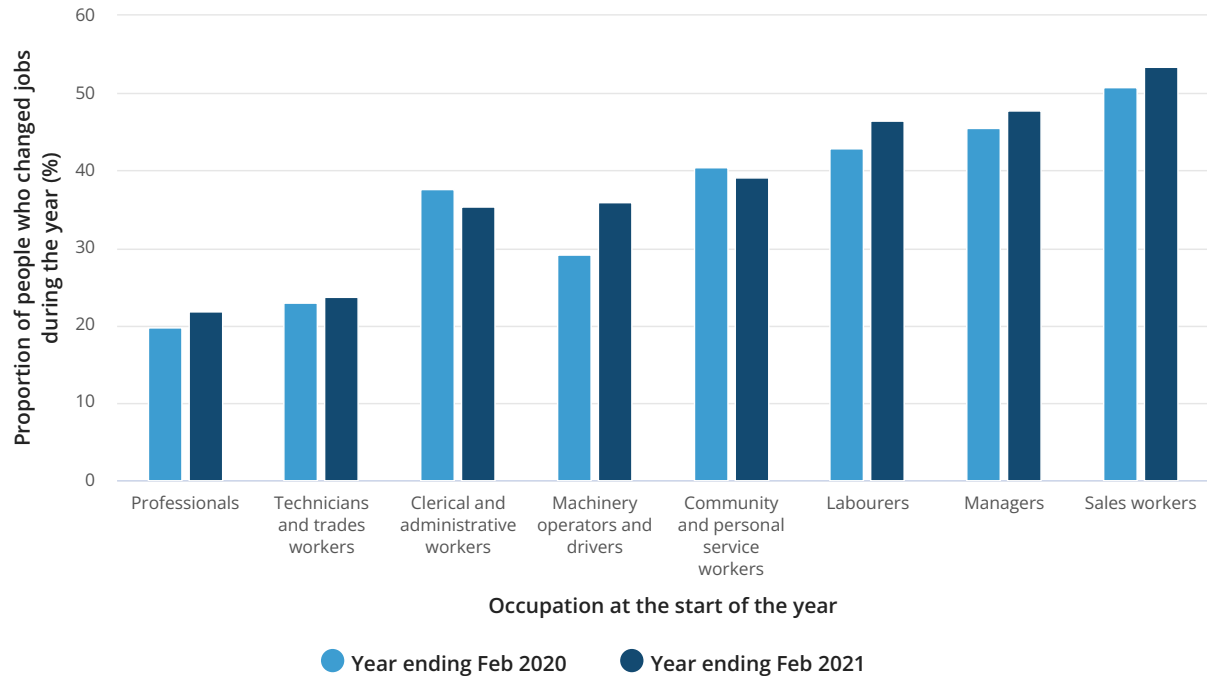
Chart 4: Changed jobs by occupation



Most employees (95%) who had been employed in their main job for a year or longer had no change in occupation with their current employer during the 12 months ending February 2021.

Of the 975,000 people who changed jobs in the last year, 58% (566,000) were working in the same major occupation group as they were at the start of the year. Sales workers were the only occupation group who had a higher proportion of people who changed jobs into a different major occupation group (53%) than in the same major occupation group (47%).

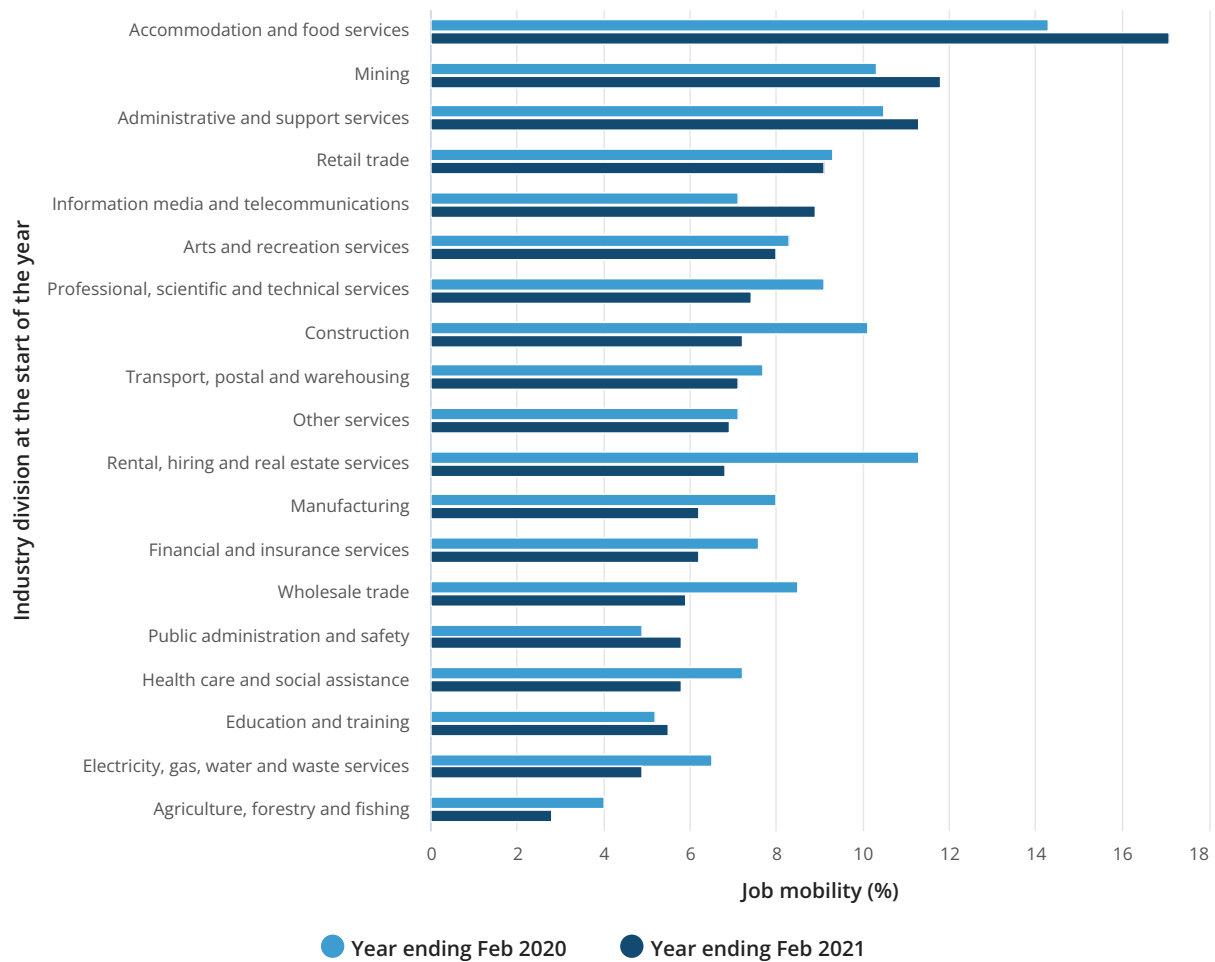
Chart 5: Changing jobs to a different occupation



Change in industry

Changes in job mobility varied by industry, with the largest increase in Accommodation and food services (14.3 per cent to 17.1 per cent) and the largest decrease in Rental, hiring and real estate services (11.3 per cent to 6.8 per cent).

Chart 6 - Job mobility by industry



Note:

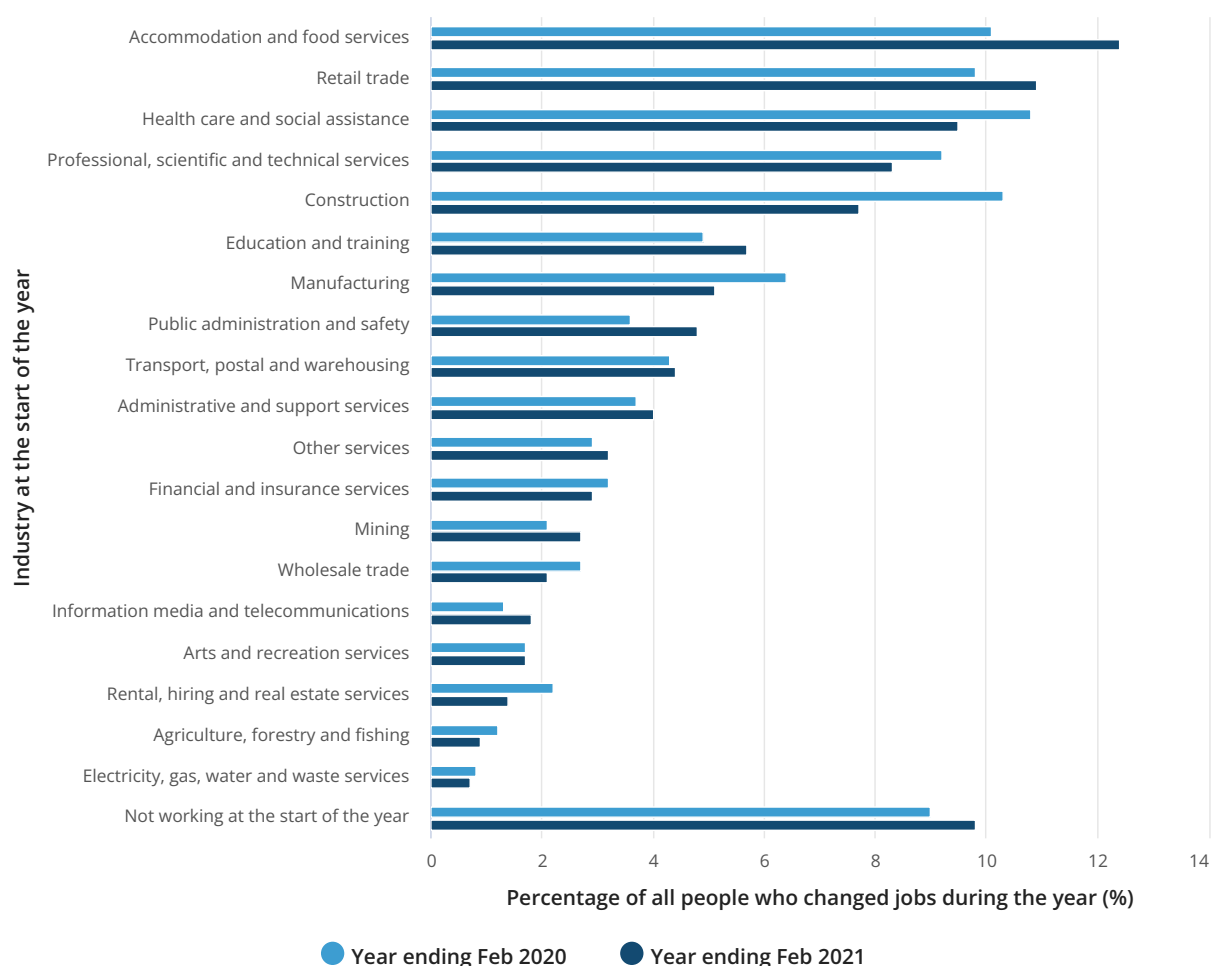
- Job mobility is the number of people who changed jobs during the year as a proportion of people who were employed at the end of the year
- The industry at the end of the year is not necessarily the same as the industry at the start of the year, as people can change industries when they change jobs

The Accommodation and food services industry also accounted for the largest share of people who changed jobs in the first year of the pandemic, in which the industry was

particularly impacted (10.1 per cent to 12.4 per cent).

While continuing to be one of the largest employers, in the previous year Accommodation and food services had been the third highest employer of people who had changed jobs, behind Health care and social assistance and Construction. This change in share over time shows that, while job mobility had been generally lower, it had also been more concentrated in this industry.

Chart 7 - Changed jobs by industry

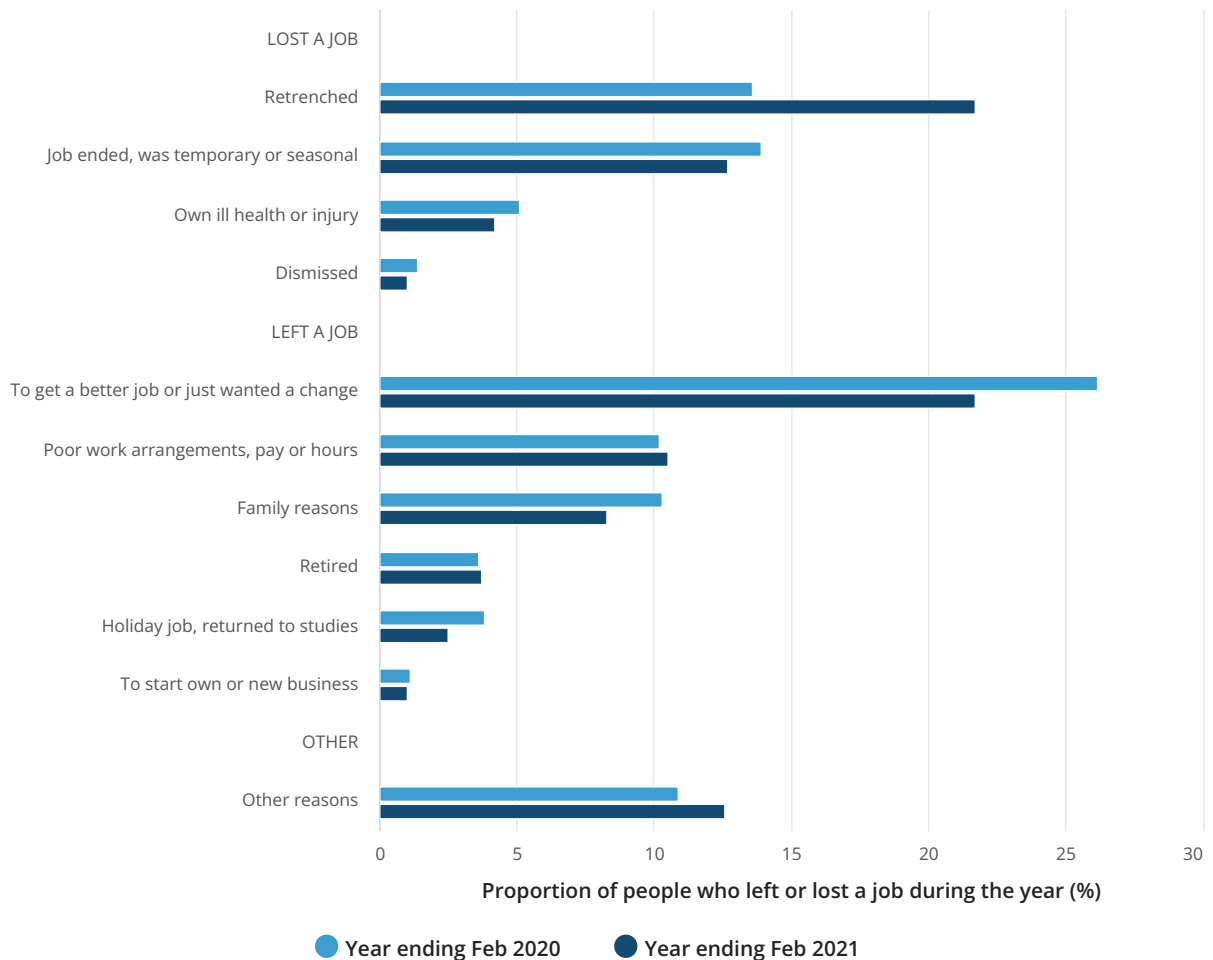


Left or lost a job

There were 1.8 million people in February 2021 who left or lost a job in the previous 12 months. 1 in 5 of these people (21.7%) were retrenched last year (393,100). This was up from 13.6% in the previous year, reflecting the extent of job losses during the first year of the pandemic.

Almost all other reasons people left or lost a job declined between the year ending February 2020 and the year ending February 2021, with a considerable fall in those who left their job to get a better job or just wanted a change, decreasing from 26.2% to 21.7%, reflecting the low levels of job mobility observed.

Chart 8: Main reason left or lost a job



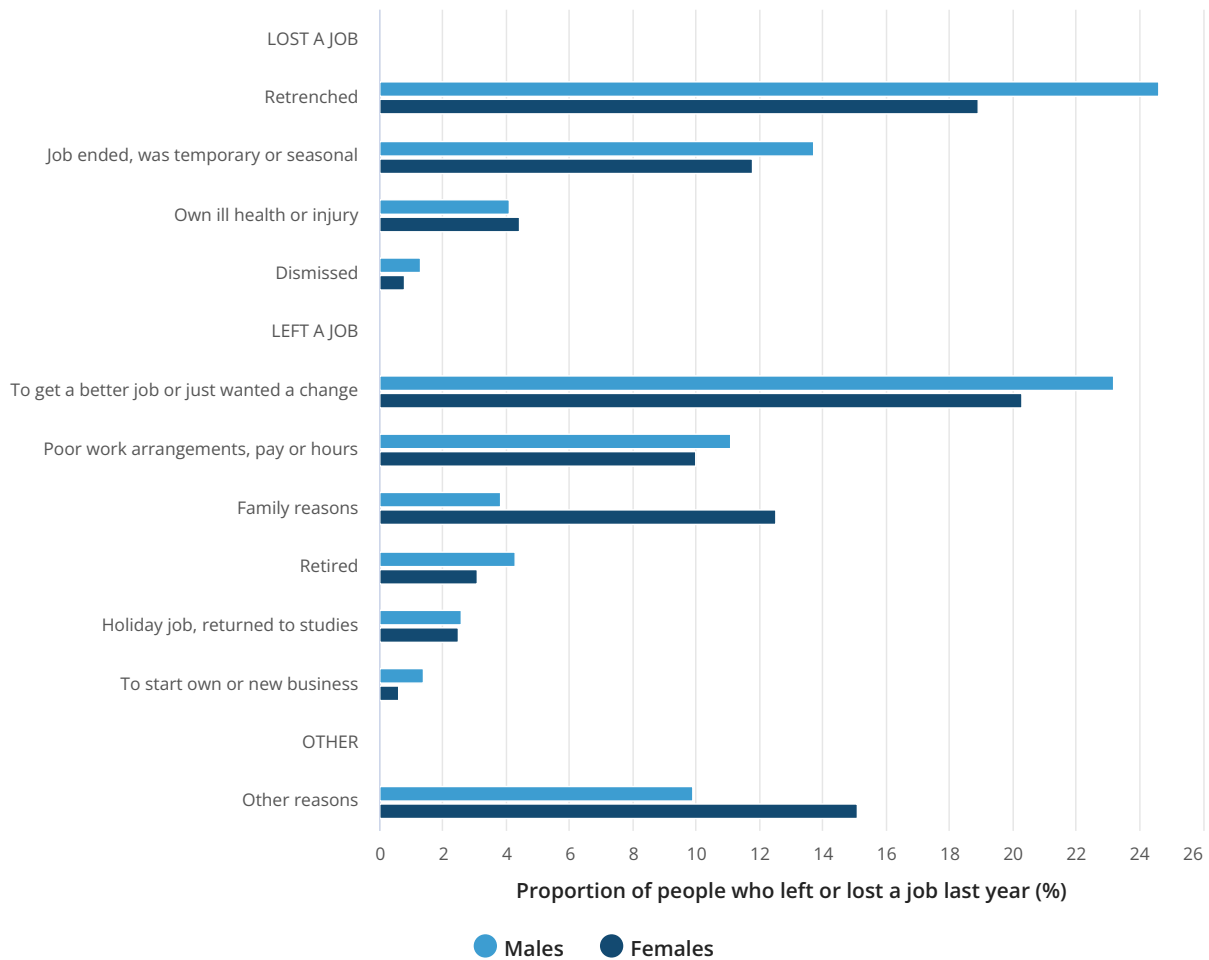
Note:

- Owner managers whose businesses closed down for economic reasons are included in "Retrenched"
- Owner managers whose businesses closed down or were sold for other reasons are included in "Other reasons"

A higher percentage of males than females reported being retrenched last year (24.6% and 18.9%). The most common reason people left a job was to get a better job or just wanted a change, (23.2% for males and 20.3% for females). A higher percentage of females reported

leaving a job for family reasons than males, (12.5% and 3.8%).

Chart 9: Main reason left or lost a job by sex



Note:

- Owner managers whose businesses closed down for economic reasons are included in "Retrenched"
- Owner managers whose businesses closed down or were sold for other reasons are included in "Other reasons"

Data downloads

Note that the table numbers below are not in sequential order. The numbers relate to the full suite of 22 tables that are published from the [Participation, Job Search and Mobility \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia/feb-2021\)](#) (PJS) survey. These are spread across the three topic based releases: [Job mobility \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/job-mobility/feb-2021\)](#), [Potential workers \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/potential-workers/feb-2021\)](#), and [Underemployed workers \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/underemployed-workers/feb-2021\)](#). All 22 tables are available from the parent PJS topic page.

Table 10: Retrenchments and other reasons for ceasing a job last year

↓ [Download XLSX](#)
[220.16 KB]

Table 17: Labour mobility, retrenchments and duration of employment

↓ [Download XLSX](#)
[92.61 KB]

Table 18: Change in employment characteristics of persons employed last year

↓ [Download XLSX](#)
[116.08 KB]

Table 19: Change in employment characteristics of persons employed last year by industry

↓ [Download XLSX](#)
[246.17 KB]

Table 20: Change in employment characteristics of persons employed last year by occupation

↓ [Download XLSX](#)
[396.91 KB]

Table 21: Populations by state and territory of usual residence

↓ [Download XLSX](#)
[289.02 KB]

All datacubes

↓ [Download ZIP](#)
[1003.17 KB]

Relative standard errors

Previous catalogue number

This release uses ABS catalogue number 6223.0*.

Data from this release was previously published in:

- [Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia>) (6226.0**), 2015-2020
- [Persons Not In the Labour Force, Underemployed Workers and Job Search Experience, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/ProductsbyCatalogue/BBB46A2E9C441282CA257DF40079A913?OpenDocument) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/ProductsbyCatalogue/BBB46A2E9C441282CA257DF40079A913?OpenDocument>) (6226.0.55.001), 2014
- [Labour Mobility, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6209.0&viewtitle=Labour%20Mobility,%20Australia~February%202013~Latest~21/08/2013&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6209.0&issue=February%202013&num=&view=&) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6209.0&viewtitle=Labour%20Mobility,%20Australia~February%202013~Latest~21/08/2013&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6209.0&issue=February%202013&num=&view=&>) (6209.0), 1972-2013
- [Labour Turnover](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6210.0&viewtitle=Labour%20Turnover~Mar%201975~Latest~14/11/1975&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6210.0&issue=Mar%201975&num=&view=&) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6210.0&viewtitle=Labour%20Turnover~Mar%201975~Latest~14/11/1975&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6210.0&issue=Mar%201975&num=&view=&>) (6210.0), 1949-1976

* Note: Catalogue number 6223.0 was previously used for [Family Status and Employment Status of the Population, Nov 1974-75](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/productsbyCatalogue/F926FA92D780E58ACA2585AA008276FA?OpenDocument) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/productsbyCatalogue/F926FA92D780E58ACA2585AA008276FA?OpenDocument>).

** Note: Catalogue number 6226.0 was previously used for School Leavers, 1970 to 1974: their Employment Status and Education Experience, May 1975.

Post release changes

6 September 2021:

- Updates to Table 21 - revisions to Population 5: Part-time workers who would prefer full-time hours.
- Updates to Table 10 - revisions to table format to separate "left or lost job for other reasons" from the "Voluntary reasons (left job)" category. No revisions to data.

Methodology

[Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia methodology, February 2021](#)